

Info and the Myths 'v' Reality

Who do we support?

We support all women regardless of their sexuality, heterosexual, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women; anyone who identifies as a woman.

What is domestic abuse?

- Physical
- Emotional/Coercive Control
- Sexual violence, rape and abuse
- Financial
- Honour Based Abuse & Forced Marriage (HBA/FM)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Stalking/Harassment
- On-line and digital (eg: revenge porn)

It includes:

- Threats
- Verbal abuse
- Isolation
- Degradation and humiliation
- Withholding money
- Controlling your phone and social media
- Constantly checking up you

What is Coercive Control?

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. It is a pattern of behaviour that leaves the victim feeling belittled, intimidated or scared.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

What about men who are abused?

Women are more likely than men to experience incidents of abuse and in particular sexual violence. We are a women-only service but will always listen to, and signpost men to a service who can help them. The following are organisations who support and offer refuge to men:

Respect: T: 0808 801 0327
Mencentric: T: 07970 138986

MYTHS 'v' REALITY

“Women are just as abusive as men”

Reality: In the vast majority of cases, domestic abuse is experienced by women and perpetrated by men. Two women a week are murdered by a current or ex-partner in England and Wales alone. Of the 92,779 domestic abuse court prosecutions last year, 92.4% of defendants were male, and 84% of victims were female. It is a gendered crime which is deeply rooted in the societal inequality between women and men.

Women are more likely than men to experience multiple incidents of abuse, different types of domestic abuse, and sexual violence particularly.

Domestic abuse exists as part of the wider spectrum of violence against women and girls, which also includes different forms of family violence such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so-called “honour crimes” that are perpetrated primarily by family members.

Statistics

Women are far more likely than men to be killed by partners/ex partners. In 2014 46% of female deaths were killed by their partner or ex-partner, compared with 7% of male victims.

Coventry has the highest rate of domestic abuse in the whole of the West Midlands.

“Domestic abuse isn’t that common”

Reality: We know through our work over the last 46 years with survivors and local services that domestic abuse is very common. On average two women are murdered each week in England and Wales by a current or former partner. Domestic abuse has a higher rate of repeat victimisation than any other crime, and on average, *the police receive over 100 emergency calls relating to domestic abuse every hour.*

In Coventry alone, the police receive 433 domestic abuse call outs every month WMP data 2016-2017

The 2015 Crime Survey of England and Wales found that, overall, 27.1% of women (an estimated 4.5 million women) have experienced domestic abuse since the age of sixteen.

“If it was that bad she’d leave!”

Reality: women stay in abusive relationships for many different reasons, and it can be very difficult for a woman to leave an abusive partner – even if she wants to. Like any other relationship, one that ends in abuse began with falling in love and being in love. Abuse rarely starts at the beginning of a relationship, but when it is established and often harder to leave.

A woman may still be in love with her partner and believe him/her when he/she says he/she is sorry and that it won’t happen again. She may be frightened for her life or for the safety of her children if she leaves; she may have nowhere to go or have no financial independence.

Abusers often isolate their partners from family and friends in order to control them, making it even more difficult for an abused woman to exit the relationship.

“He can be a good father even if he abuses his partner – the parents’ relationship doesn’t have to affect the children”

Reality: An estimated 90% of children whose mothers are abused witness the abuse. The effects are traumatic and long-lasting. When a child witnesses domestic abuse, **this is child abuse**. Between 40% and 70% of these children are also direct victims of the abuse which is happening at home.

“She provoked him” “She asked for it” “She must’ve done something to deserve it”

Reality: This myth is widespread and deep-rooted. It is often based on the belief that the man is the head of the family, and that his role is to punish his partner or children if they act in a way he doesn’t approve of.

This myth is dangerous because any reference to ‘provocation’ means that we are blaming the woman and relieving the abuser of responsibility for his actions.

Abuse or violence of any kind is never the victim’s fault. Responsibility always lies with the perpetrator, and with him alone. Do not blame the victim.

“Do alcohol and drugs make a person violent?”

Many men are violent when they are stone cold sober. Blaming drink and drugs is an excuse and may be a trigger but never an excuse.

“Domestic abuse only happens in poor families on council estates”

Anyone can be abused no matter where they live or how much money they have, or whatever profession they are in. There is no stereotype.

“Abusive men have a mental illness”

Research has shown that men with mental health problems is no higher than society as a whole. If abusive men were mentally ill then why do they only abuse their partners and not strangers, friends or colleagues?

“He only hit her because he was stressed”

Losing your temper or being out of control is very much being in control! Often they choose when and where they hit their partner, on areas of the body that are not on show, while they are in private. They are *very* aware of what they are doing.

“Domestic abuse is a private matter and you shouldn’t get involved”

We are **all** affected by domestic abuse; it is a crime and it is everyone’s issue. Everyone has a responsibility to speak out against it.

“Women are more likely to be attacked by strangers than by those who claim to love them”

Reality: In fact, the opposite is true. Women are far more likely to be assaulted, raped and murdered by men known to them than by strangers. 10% of rapes are committed by men unknown to the victim. Women are far likelier to be attacked by a man they know and trust.

Two women a week in England and Wales are murdered by a current or ex-partner.

“Do you recognise any of this behaviour?”

If you or anyone you know is experiencing abuse of any kind, please call us to discuss how we can help you. You do not have to leave the relationship for us to help you.

We believe you, we do not judge you or tell you what to do.

Our contact details are:

Website: www.coventryhaven.co.uk

Public Address: The Listening Post, 22 Marlborough Road, Coventry CV2 4EP

Drop-In's: held every Monday and Wednesday 10am-2pm

Tel: 02476 444077

Email: info@coventryhaven.co.uk

Open hours at The Listening Post are currently: 9am – 4.30pm

Drop-In's – No appointment needed: Monday and Wednesday 10am – 2pm at 22 Marlborough Road

DO NOT SUFFER IN SILENCE – IT IS NEVER YOUR FAULT

IN AN EMERGENCY PLEASE CALL THE POLICE ON 999

24/7 HELPLINE TEL: 0808 2000247